Materials Library Software

The Materials Library Software (MLS) is the link between the contents of the physical materials sample library and the digital information.

It allows users to browse the library remote from the physical sample library, and collate and record project material palettes and knowledge.

Access the MLS by navigating in your browser to www.thematerialslibrary.com and login with your credentials. You may wish to create a bookmark of this in your browser for easy access.
Materials Library Software interface

The MLS functionality is divided across three tabs: MATERIALS, COMPLETED PROJECTS and LIVE PROJECTS.*

The MATERIALS tab is where users browse and search the library contents.

*Completed and Live Projects tabs will only appear if they have projects to display.
Navigating the library samples

Users can browse the materials in the library by navigating the MATERIALS tab using three methods: the Materials typology tree, the Application and Attribute filters, and keyword search.

If simply looking for inspiration, users can scroll through the thumbnails of samples to browse the library materials in a randomly generated order.

Users can also choose between viewing the library contents by individual samples or by product families.

Click a sample thumbnail to view that sample.
Advanced, granular refinement

By combining navigation methods the software allows sophisticated refinement of the user’s search, defining exactly what they are looking for in detail, whatever the approach is; be it material type, application, technical constraint, aesthetic quality, performance characteristic or a combination of all.

It is recommended that the available navigation methods are employed as required, proceeding top to bottom. It is not essential that your search remains linear, however. You can edit and further refine active searches as required.

It is also strongly recommended to use the filters provided where possible, rather than using keyword search. For example, if looking for a ‘red’ coloured sample use the Colour Attribute filter rather than using a keyword search for ‘red’.

Keyword search should be used primarily for narrowing results by: manufacturer name, product name, product family name, sample number and sample location.
Application and Attribute filters

To make it easier to navigate, the list of applications within the Application filter menu is nested. When selecting an Application filter, for example "Interior", all samples tagged with the chosen application term and all samples tagged with application terms below the selected term in the nested list hierarchy are displayed as results.

The Finish and Form Attribute filters are grouped by material type to also aid navigation, but they do not demonstrate the same nested selection behaviour as Applications.

The Finish Attribute terms are further grouped by the type of Finish: Mechanical, Applied or Process. These filters are only displayed if there is associated data entered in the MLS.

Form and Finish also contain a ‘Universal’ group each. As different material groups can use different terminology for similar forms, the ‘Universal’ Form terms (e.g. "Sheet/Tile/Panel/Mosaic") allows the user to select similar forms of products across the material groups, regardless of the terms proprietary to individual material groups.

The Finish ‘Universal’ terms are types of finishing that apply across the material groups. For example the “Sprayed” "Finish, Process" when selected will display Samples of all material types that have a "Sprayed" finish.

To remove any applied filter click on the filter tag in the filter history. To completely clear all filters and start a fresh search click your practice’s logo or the MATERIALS tab.
Connecting physical and digital

Each material sample in your physical library features a unique QR (Quick Response) code on its library label.

Clicking the **SCAN SAMPLE** button activates the hardware’s camera, whether that be a desktop webcam, mobile device or tablet-integrated camera.

Use the camera window to align and scan the QR code on the sample label. This will open the information data sheet for the scanned sample. If the window is obscured by the sample you are scanning you can move the window position by dragging it using the ✈ icon. Close the window by clicking the ✗ icon.
The sample data sheet provides the key sample information, images, weblinks and comments about the experience of working with the material, preserving vital knowledge within the practice.

If the user has arrived at a sample data sheet via the software (rather than directly scanning a sample) the data sheet tells the user where to locate the sample in the physical library.

From the sample data sheet we can assign the sample to a project or projects by using the **ASSIGN TO PROJECT** menu.
For samples that have been added to the library as part of a "Product Family" of similar products, you can also view a data sheet summarising the product family.

A product family data sheet is similar in appearance but different to a sample data sheet. To help users immediately differentiate the data sheets, a sample data sheet has a grey label while a product family data sheet has a white label with an outline.

Depending on the data entered, a product family data sheet will display: the products available in the product family, the samples belonging to that product family that are currently in the library, any related product families, and the projects that the samples of that product family have been assigned to.

Samples can not be assigned to or removed from projects on a Product Family data sheet.
Materials Library Software interface

The **COMPLETED PROJECTS** and **LIVE PROJECTS** tabs allow users to view projects that have been entered into the software. Users can use keyword search or filter by name, location, project type or date to find a particular project.

By clicking on a project thumbnail, users can view details about the project, the materials previously specified on completed projects or create, explore and share material palettes of live projects.

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*Project filters*

*Alphabetical navigation*

*Project keyword search*

*Project thumbnails*
Project materials palettes

Each project has its own project page displaying information about the project and the materials assigned to that project, including the application the material has been chosen for. Access a project’s page by clicking on the project’s thumbnail on the COMPLETED PROJECTS or LIVE PROJECTS tabs, or on a data sheet.

The Material, Application and Attribute filters can also be employed here to narrow down large palettes of materials.

Project image gallery

Project information, internal contacts and a weblink to the project

Project materials, which can be tagged with their project-specific application and a brief description

Filters allow easier navigation of large palettes of materials

Project description area can be used to articulate the project, including specific material considerations, approaches and solutions
Mobile and tablet support

The MLS’s ‘responsive’ design ensures it displays correctly and fully functions on PC, mobile and tablet devices of all sizes, in both landscape and portrait orientations.

Users can conveniently access the system from their personal mobile or tablet devices and use the hardware’s integrated camera to scan sample QR codes.

Unfortunately, on older iOS devices (running iOS 10.2.1 and earlier) there is a restriction in place by Apple preventing websites from accessing the device’s camera.

If this issue affects your device, as a workaround, please use the default iOS camera app to scan sample QR codes. This will open the sample data sheet in the Safari browser.